

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

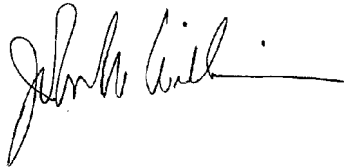
Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Notice PM-2146

For: FAS, FSA, and RMA Employees

54th Secretary's Honor Awards Program

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

**A
Background**

The Secretary's Honor Awards:

- are the most prestigious awards that are given by USDA
- recognize outstanding contributions supporting the mission of USDA by enhancing the quality of life for American people by:
 - supporting the production of agriculture
 - ensuring safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply
 - caring for agricultural, forest and range lands
 - supporting sound development of rural communities
 - providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents
 - expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services
 - working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world.

Continued on the next page

Disposal Date

February 1, 2000

Distribution

All FAS, FSA, and RMA employees; State Office relay to County Offices

1 Overview (Continued)

A

Background (Continued)

Embodied in the USDA Mission Statement are 3 themes Secretary Glickman has identified as strategic goals for USDA policies and programs which include:

- expanding economic trade opportunities for agricultural producers and other residents
- ensuring food for the hungry and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply
- promoting sensible management of our natural resources.

Note: The Honor Awards' categories have been revised to support those goals as well as other aspects which focus on the USDA Strategic Plan. See Exhibit 1.

B

Purpose

This notice informs all offices of the opportunity to submit nominations for the 54th Secretary's Honor Awards Program. All nominations must be submitted by COB **Wednesday, December 29, 1999.**

C

Equal Opportunity/ Work Force Diversity Policy

In keeping with the Secretary's initiative to promote equal opportunity in employment and programs, agencies are encouraged to consider nominations from all segments of the workforce. All nominees are eligible for the same level of recognition.

It is the Department's policy and practice to prohibit discrimination against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, national origin, or sexual orientation.

2 Criteria

A

Nomination Considerations

Offices should review highly successful programs and management improvements to identify potential nominees for awards. Consideration should also be given to nominating those who have earned recognition through outstanding performance ratings, promotions, quality step increases, cash awards, or special awards within or outside the Department.

Continued on the next page

Notice PM-2146

2 Criteria (Continued)

B

Evaluation Period

Contributions must have been made, or the results realized, within the **past 3 years**. Heroic acts should have occurred within the **past year**.

C

Eligibility

Employees at all grade levels and private citizens are eligible to receive these awards.

Note: See Exhibit 1 for a description of eligible award categories.

3 Awards

A

Types of Nominations

Types of nominations may be submitted according to the following table.

Type of Nomination	Number of Individuals
Individual	
Team	Limited to 2 individuals working together.
Group	Shall consist of 3 or more, but not more than 25 , individuals working together as a unit. Note: Include only those individuals who have significantly contributed to the cited work of the group.

B

Nomination Contents

All nominations must clearly describe:

- the significance of the contribution being recognized
- how the quality of performance substantially exceeds normal job expectations
- the measurable or nonmeasurable benefits achieved, or both.

Nominations shall contain adequate background information to establish the context and scope of each nominee's contribution.

Note: The use of acronyms is discouraged without initial explanation.

Continued on the next page

3 Awards (Continued)

C

Photographs

Photographs of the individual and team member nominees must be submitted with the nomination. There shall be **2** black and white, 5" x 7" portrait photographs, showing the head and shoulders only.

Note: Scanned photos are not acceptable.

D

Justification

Award nominations will **not** be considered and will be returned to the nominating official, without action, if justifications are:

- **in excess of 2 pages**
 - submitted in reduced print font
 - submitted with additional attachments, unless provided on AD-495.
-

E

Completing AD-495

Each nomination will consist of a completed AD-495. Ensure that:

- a **12-pitch courier print font** is used

Note: If a 12-pitch courier print font is **not** available, other 12-pitch print fonts may be used.

- margins are identical to AD-495
- names, titles, citations, and other relevant information are double-checked for spelling, grammar, and format

Note: Employee's name will be printed as shown on the nomination.

Continued on the next page

3 Awards (Continued)

E

Completing AD-495 (Continued)

- citations are **25 words or less**

Note: The citation will be used on the Honor Awards Program brochure and on the recipient's plaques and certificates. **Be sure to edit them carefully.**

- all requested information on AD-495 is completed, such as employee's congressional district, awards, and publications.

Note: Group nominations must list any previous individual or group Departmental Honor Awards presented to any group member.

A nomination must include the original and 11 copies. Each copy must be 3-hole punched with 3/8" holes. Except for list of group members, attachments or continuation sheets will **not** be accepted. A nomination is limited to 6 pages of the nomination form.

F

Obtaining AD-495

AD-495 consists of 5 pages and 1 double-sided cover sheet and is available in WordPerfect. FAS, FSA, and RMA offices shall contact 1 of the following for AD-495.

Location	Contact
FSA State Offices	AD-495 was provided to State Offices in WordPerfect Forms Release No. 16.
FSA Kansas City Complex, including St. Louis	Access "k:\wpforms" for an electronic copy.
FAS, FSA, and RMA National Offices	Access "u:\wpforms" for an electronic copy.
FAS Overseas Offices	Submit on bond paper to the Deputy Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Affairs, where AD-495 will be completed.
County Offices	Contact State Offices.

Notice PM-2146

4 Nominating Procedures

A

Nominations

Follow procedures in paragraph 5 to submit nominations.

B

Selections

HRD shall inform recommending officials of the Agency's decision in January.

Nominations submitted after the December 29, 1999, due date will not be accepted by the Reviewing Committee.

5 Submitting AD-495's

A

Contacts for Submitting AD-495's

Submit AD-495's according to the following table.

IF nomination is from...	THEN submit AD-495...
FSA and RMA National Office	through the Staff Office or Division Director to Stephen Crisp, HRD, at 418-8975. Note: The Staff Office or Division Director shall be the recommending official on AD-495, Part E.
RSO's and Compliance Offices	to Stephen Crisp, HRD.
FAS	through appropriate Deputy Administrator to HRD.
FSA State and County Offices	through SED to HRD. Note: SED shall be the recommending official on AD-495, Part E.
APFO	through Director to HRD. Note: The Director is the recommending official on AD 495, Part E.
Kansas City Complex, including St. Louis	through KCMO, Personnel Division, at 816-926-6643, to HRD.

Secretary's Honor Award Categories

Type	Categories
1	<p><u>Secretary's Award for Expanding Economic Trade Opportunities for Agricultural Producers and Other Rural Residents</u></p> <p>This category recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing the safety net for farmers • expanding a global market for agricultural and forest products and services • promoting a fair and competitive domestic marketplace • providing economic opportunities to support sound development of rural communities.
2	<p><u>Secretary's Award for Ensuring Food for the Hungry, and a Safe, Affordable, Nutritious, and Accessible Food Supply</u></p> <p>This category recognizes contributions supporting the production of agriculture to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequate supplies of affordable and nutritious food • safeguards and standards of quality in the food supply through inspecting and grading services. <p>This award also recognizes achievements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operating food and nutrition assistance programs to ensure children and low- income families consume a healthy diet • promoting gleanings and other food recovery programs that make nutritious and wholesome food available to impoverished members of our population • developing guidelines promoting food nutrition • encouraging the development of farmer cooperatives and farmers' markets, that support the structure of American agriculture by promoting marketing opportunities for small and medium-sized farming and ranching operations, and offering farm-fresh foods to consumers.

Continued on the next page

Secretary's Honor Award Categories (Continued)

Type	Categories
3	<p><u>Secretary's Award for Promoting Sensible Management of Natural Resources</u></p> <p>This category recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of air, water, and environment, and protecting fragile forestland and wilderness ecosystems.</p> <p>Achievements may also reflect partnerships with farmers, ranchers, and private and public landowners across the country which reflect assisting landowners, land users, and land managers to care for the land.</p>
4	<p><u>The Secretary's Award for Outstanding Customer Service</u></p> <p>This category recognizes those who, over time, consistently demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in furthering the mission of USDA through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective customer service • efficient program delivery • good management of resources that include, but are not limited to, human, capital, and information. <p>This category includes, but is not limited to, notable achievements in meeting the public's demands of operating the Government fairly, effectively, and efficiently as resources become more restrained. In addition, this category recognizes significant accomplishments in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reengineering service capabilities • improving data systems and processes • providing better program management information • improving communications with the public • eliminating inefficiencies in general operations • improving customer service, both internal and external to USDA. <p>Also included in this category are individuals who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in providing support which includes employees at lower grade levels, usually GS-9 or equivalent and below, whose dedication and hard work enable or assist the work of their fellow employees. Achievements may reflect dollar savings, system benefits, increased productivity, or improved procedures or techniques.</p>

Continued on the next page

Secretary's Honor Award Categories (Continued)

Type	Categories
5	<p data-bbox="298 302 846 333"><u>Secretary's Award for Equal Opportunity</u></p> <p data-bbox="298 369 1360 468">The elements listed below are not all inclusive; other factors may also be addressed. All nominees will be considered for the equal opportunity award on the basis of exceptional achievements in the following areas:</p> <p data-bbox="298 504 654 535">Recruitment and Retention</p> <p data-bbox="298 571 1438 669">(1) Recruitment and outreach activities undertaken by the individual or individuals which have been successful in attracting minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, including 30 percent or more disabled veterans.</p> <p data-bbox="347 705 1438 804">Example Nominees who visit colleges and universities with large numbers of minorities, women, or persons with disabilities that resulted in the hiring of targeted individuals.</p> <p data-bbox="298 840 1455 972">(2) Highly successful methods to improve advancement opportunities for minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, such as use of the USDA Career Enhancement Program, or use of the mentoring programs employed by an individual or individuals that resulted in opportunities for career advancement for program participants.</p> <p data-bbox="298 1008 1463 1073">(3) Innovative actions to enhance employee retention, such as use of rotational or developmental assignments, spousal placement, job sharing, part-time employment, or flexiplace.</p> <p data-bbox="298 1108 1433 1207">(4) Creative initiatives undertaken by an individual or individuals which have proven to be successful in removing barriers to employment of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, including 30 percent or more disabled veterans.</p> <p data-bbox="347 1243 1422 1308">Example: Nominees' use of volunteer assignments that lead to employment for targeted persons.</p> <p data-bbox="298 1344 1463 1442">(5) Liaison activities with outside groups which have been especially successful in the referral of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, including 30 percent or more disabled veterans.</p> <p data-bbox="347 1478 1438 1610">Example: Nominees' liaison activities with the 1890 Institutions, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Institutions, the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and state vocational rehabilitation centers that led to employment of targeted persons.</p> <p data-bbox="298 1646 1446 1843">(6) Demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in furthering the mission of USDA. This category includes notable achievements in scientific research, economic analysis, soil conservation, risk management, farm program delivery and rural economic and community development, food program delivery, administrative management, improvements to the safety, health and well-being of others. This category also, includes significant accomplishments in improving service, both internal and external to USDA.</p>

Continued on the next page

Secretary's Honor Award Categories (Continued)

Type	Categories
5 (cntd)	<p data-bbox="298 323 776 359">Accommodations and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="298 401 1468 583">(1) Plans or initiatives which represent substantial progress in achieving special accommodations and accessibility for individuals with disabilities, including 30 percent or more disabled veterans. These plans or initiatives may include, but are not limited to, the establishment of model USDA Service Centers with program access for persons with disabilities, for example, model program delivery mechanisms. <li data-bbox="298 625 1468 695">(2) Creative initiatives, such as job restructuring or redesign, to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities, including 30 percent or more disabled veterans. <li data-bbox="298 737 1468 919">(3) Innovative and substantial use of technology to enhance the capability and productivity of persons with disabilities, including 30 percent or more disabled veterans. Include contacts with technology resource centers such as the USDA TARGET Center, and the Job Accommodations Network, etc. that provide information on technology that assists employees in performing their jobs. <li data-bbox="298 961 1468 1073">(4) Exceptional efforts to support the initiatives of USDA advisory committees, and the Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture, including 30 percent or more disabled veterans. <p data-bbox="298 1115 850 1150">Program Delivery and Customer Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="298 1192 1468 1333">(1) Significant efforts to develop public outreach techniques, mechanisms, or program information to small and disadvantaged businesses, small minority and women-owned businesses, contractors, minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, resulting in increased business and program delivery to these groups. <p data-bbox="347 1375 1435 1486">Example: Nominees' participation in procurement fairs to small and disadvantaged businesses, small minority and women-owned business/contractors that led to the letting of contracts with these targeted groups.</p> <li data-bbox="298 1528 1468 1640">(2) Highly successful initiatives in developing new and improved means of delivering programs to our clients in a fair and equitable manner. Include examples of prompt action to resolve complaints. <li data-bbox="298 1682 1468 1793">(3) Highly successful action to increase the representation of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities on State Advisory committees, or on local boards, council, and committees.

Continued on the next page

Secretary's Honor Award Categories (Continued)

Type	Categories
6	<p data-bbox="298 323 1084 359"><u>Secretary's Award for Emergency Response and Heroism</u></p> <p data-bbox="298 401 1463 548">This category recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in responding to floods, fires, storms, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, or other conditions requiring emergency response. This category also recognizes USDA employees who perform acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.</p>
7	<p data-bbox="298 575 805 611"><u>Secretary's Award for Public Service</u></p> <p data-bbox="298 653 1463 758">This category recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in public service. This category includes those employees, private citizens, or institutions that assist USDA to better reach and serve all parts of our diverse American population.</p>
